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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Letter dated 30 January 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 24 January 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on elections in the Gambia.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the agenda item "Human rights questions: Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Netherlands to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement issued on 24 January 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on elections in the Gambia

The European Union has taken note of the National Assembly election held on 2 January 1997. The Union congratulates the people of the Gambia and the Provisional Independent Electoral Commission on the way the preparation and the handling of these elections has taken place. The Union considers the elections an important step for the Gambia in its return to civilian democratic government, in spite of the ban imposed before the presidential elections on three former political parties, their leaders and former ministers, which remains in force. The European Union hopes that the National Assembly will soon be able to fulfil the important tasks bestowed on it by the Constitution.

The European Union welcomed the release of a number of detainees last November and it urges the Government of the Gambia to release without delay those who remain in detention for political reasons.

The European Union calls on the Gambian authorities to proceed further on the path to democracy, good governance and human rights in line with the new Constitution and is willing to reinforce its dialogue with the Gambia on these and other matters of common concern.